

Voting NO on Ballot Measure 1 leaves Alaskans in charge of whether gambling should be expanded in our state. The creation of the Alaska Gaming Commission will take away that right by giving five (5) unelected individuals serving on the Commission the ability to singlehandedly authorize any future gaming activities in Alaska including slot machines and casinos. As a Dept. of Revenue entity, the Alaska Gaming Commission would have very little incentive to examine the harmful and addictive consequences and societal costs of gambling.

Voting NO on Ballot Measure 1 sends a strong message that the net societal effect of our government embracing gambling as a legitimate form of raising revenue is wrong and would bring with it disastrous consequences.

Unfortunately, some lawmakers today are looking toward a revenue stream that has a landslide of cultural and social costs in its wake. There's a reason why they say what happens in Vegas ... stays in Vegas.

Nevada, the gambling state, has been ranked #1 in the country in suicides, divorce, prostitution, women killed by men and gambling addiction and has been ranked as the "most dangerous state in the nation" by a nationally respected company that compares rates per 100,000 for murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary and motor vehicle theft.

Voting NO on Ballot Measure 1 sends a message that Alaskans do not want to grow our government and create a new bureaucracy to oversee an activity that ravages the lives of individuals and families, and contributes substantially to the moral decay of our communities. The societal costs of problem gambling are significant, from divorce, child neglect, indebtedness, bankruptcies and gambling-related financial crimes and loss of jobs.

While some Alaskans may consider gambling to be a harmless pastime, many underestimate the costs in dollars and human suffering associated with it.

Studies show that about 2.5 million Americans are pathological gamblers, and another 3 million are problem gamblers. According to the American Insurance Institute, gambling is the main cause of white collar crime, and is the third leading cause of individual bankruptcy in America.

Gambling is driven by and subsists on greed. For this reason, the activity is morally bankrupt from its very foundation. Gambling is also an activity which exploits the vulnerable — the young, the old, and those susceptible to addictive behaviors. Further, gambling entices the financially disadvantaged classes with the unrealistic hope of escape from poverty through instant riches, thus ultimately worsening the plight of our poorest citizens. Gambling undermines the work ethic. It is based on the premise of something for nothing, a concept that sanctions idleness rather than industriousness, slothfulness instead of initiative.

Though the human suffering caused by compulsive gambling may be borne by a minority of the population, the overall economic and social costs are shared by all. Alaskans should ultimately have the final say as to whether our Government should be partially funded by gambling. Voting NO on Ballot Measure 1 gives Alaskans that authority.

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